

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Pelcombe Training Limited**

**13 January 2003**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

## Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.



## SUMMARY

### The provider

Pelcombe Training Limited is a privately owned limited company. Its headquarters are in Colchester and it has 24 other training centres in Teesside, Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Worcestershire and South Humberside. There are 150 staff, of whom 134 work full time. The company contracts with its local Learning and Skills Councils as well as Jobcentre Plus. It provides work-based learning for young people in engineering and manufacturing, business administration, retailing and customer service, hospitality, hairdressing, and health and social care. It also provides foundation programmes. Its Jobcentre Plus programmes include land-based, construction, engineering and manufacturing, business administration, retailing and transport, hospitality, hairdressing, health and social care, and foundation programmes. Land-based provision and construction programmes were not inspected. There is a total of 835 learners, 252 of whom are on work-based learning for young people and 583 on New Deal and programme centres.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, training for learners in engineering and manufacturing, retailing and transport, hairdressing and foundation programmes is satisfactory, as is equality of opportunity. Training for learners in business administration and health and social care is unsatisfactory as are Pelcombe Training Limited's leadership and management and quality assurance. Training for learners in hospitality is very weak.

### GRADES

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	4

<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3
<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>5</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	5
<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3
<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4
<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4
New Deal 18-24	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	3
Programme Centres	3

## KEY STRENGTHS

- good achievement rates on New Deal 18-24 foundation programmes
- good work placements
- good support for learners
- well-managed transfer of New Deal 25+ provision in Leicestershire and South Humberside

## KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor internal communication
- inadequate management of additional learning support
- poor quality assurance
- poor achievement rates on work-based learning for young people
- inadequate planning of learning for some learners

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of 14 inspectors spent a total of 65 days Pelcombe Training Limited (Pelcombe) during January 2003. They interviewed 197 learners and 44 employers. They conducted 96 interviews with staff and observed 26 training sessions. They examined a range of documents including learners' and staff records and personal files, the company's business plan, specialist learning resources, policies and procedures, promotional literature, awarding bodies' reports, and achievement data. They examined 77 portfolios of evidence. Inspectors also studied Pelcombe's self assessment report and development plan, which were produced in April 2002.

### Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	0	4	1	1	0	6
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Foundation programmes	0	2	3	6	1	1	0	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. Pelcombe has its headquarters in Colchester. The company's other 24 training centres are in Teesside, Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Worcestershire and South Humberside. There are 150 staff members, of whom 134 work full time. Pelcombe contracts with Jobcentre Plus in Teesside, Bedfordshire, Romford, Ilford, Suffolk, Waveney, North Essex and Cambridgeshire to deliver a range of adult training and employment programmes. It contracts with local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) in Essex, Suffolk and Waveney, and Norfolk to deliver modern apprenticeships, national vocational qualification (NVQ) training, Life Skills and preparatory training. Some transportation training is carried out by subcontractors. The company is a member of the Coastal Education and Training Partnership, which provides vocational training programmes funded by the Education Action Zone, to young people still in mainstream education. The company also offers training consultancy services and is the sole examination centre in East Anglia and the West Midlands for the electrical contracting industry.

3. There are 835 learners, 817 of them in the areas of learning inspected. Of these, 252 are on programmes of work based learning for young people, and 583 on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, New Deal 18-24 and programme centres.

### Work-based learning for young people

4. Work-based learning for young people is satisfactory in engineering, retailing and customer service, and hairdressing. It is unsatisfactory in business administration, health and social care and Life Skills. It is very weak in hospitality. Achievement rates are low in all the areas of learning. Retention rates are low in business administration, retailing and customer service and hospitality. There is good support for learners in business administration, retailing and customer service, and hairdressing. In health and social care there are good, supportive employers, and in hairdressing, employers are effectively involved in training. In engineering, however, there is insufficient involvement of workplace supervisors in NVQ training and assessment. Learners in business administration produce a good range of key skills evidence. In hairdressing and health and social care, however, key skills training has been introduced late in learners' vocational training. There is inadequate planning of training in business administration, retailing and customer service, hospitality and Life Skills.

### New Deal 18-24

5. There is good achievement on the New Deal 18-24 Gateway programmes. Many clients start these programmes reluctantly and with poor motivation. Provision at centres in Ipswich and Cambridge is particularly good. Staff provide effective training, support and encouragement to clients. There are good resources used in the training at all centres. There are inadequate progress reviews for some of the clients.



## **New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults**

6. There is good pastoral support for clients. On foundation programme, tutors are skilled at quickly establishing a good rapport with clients. In retailing and transport, the achievement rates for clients on lift truck programmes are good. On basic employability training (BET), however, there are poor rates of entry into employment. Achievement rates in business administration are low. In retailing, there is some poor planning of training, and clients' induction is not satisfactory. In business administration there is good information technology (IT) training at the Ilford training centre. A wide range of training techniques is used to meet clients' preferences, and clients are given clear and appropriate manuals and handouts. In four new centres there are insufficient resources for business administration. There have been staff shortages. Clients have not had progress reviews and assessment visits have been infrequent. Seven clients in three of these centres are making no progress towards achieving their qualifications despite being on programmes for up to six months. On foundation programmes, good resources are used at all training centres and clients' achievement is celebrated. There is, however, an inadequate focus on clients' individual needs. Progress reviews are inadequate for some clients.

## **Programme Centres**

7. The programme centre at Chelmsford is good and the other programme centres are satisfactory. Clients appreciate the content of their training and the effective support staff give them. Teaching is relevant to clients' needs and well structured. Training resources are good. Individual learning plans, progress reviews and clients' records are comprehensive and thorough. This year, 52 per cent of clients have gained employment.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 4**

8. Pelcombe Training Limited was formed in January 1998 as a result of a planned buyout from the Pelcombe Group Limited. Today, the company is privately owned, with the equity being held between its three directors and the company secretary. The company's mission is to provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and organisations through learning, education, training and workplace experience.

9. Pelcombe has 150 staff, of whom 134 work full time. There is a board of directors, which comprises the managing director, the quality and standards director, the finance director and the contracts director. Two regional managers co-ordinate the activities of the training centres and report directly to the board of directors. Each centre has its own manager and team of staff. Centre managers report to an appropriate regional or district manager.

10. Overall responsibility for equal opportunities lies with the staff training and development manager. Pelcombe has an established equal opportunities policy and policy statement and has recently developed an equality statement. It also has quality assurance policies and procedures. Responsibility for quality assurance across the company lies with the quality standards director, assisted by two quality assurance managers. The company produced its fourth self-assessment report in April 2002. Pelcombe is accredited with ISO 9001, an international quality assurance standard.

### STRENGTHS

- well-managed transfer of New Deal 25+ provision in Leicestershire and South Humberside
- particularly effective complaints procedure
- effective implementation of new continuous improvement initiatives

### WEAKNESSES

- lack of clear strategic planning
- poor management of data
- poor internal communication
- insufficient staff training and development procedures
- inadequate management of additional learning support
- inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities
- poor quality assurance
- inadequate agreements and monitoring arrangements with subcontractors and employers

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better recording of minutes of meetings

11. At the end of its current contract Pelcombe will be transferring the remainder of its private sector-led New Deal 25+ provision to another training provider. This contract transfer is being managed well. A transfer plan and agreement were drawn up at Pelcombe's headquarters and are being implemented in appropriate stages, taking account of the needs of staff and clients. Clients are being systematically informed of the transfer, both verbally and by letter, towards the end of the Gateway stage of their training programme. Company staff are being kept informed effectively, and there are regular meetings with the new training provider. The company directors have visited staff in Leicestershire and South Humberside to offer reassurance. All staff have been interviewed individually, and additional counselling has been offered to certain staff. Most staff will be employed by the new training provider. The directors negotiated a package for each member of staff who wished to transfer. Clients interviewed said that the transfer of provision had not had any impact on their programme or learning experience.

12. Pelcombe has a three-year business plan but no associated strategic plan. The business plan objectives do not focus sufficiently on the learners' experience, and lack associated measurable targets. The plan does not detail how Pelcombe's three-year objectives will be achieved. The company's mission statement, vision and values are not adequately represented in the plan. The plan does not link with Pelcombe's quality assurance objectives or self-assessment process. Staff, subcontractors and employers have not been asked to contribute to the business plan. They are not aware of its contents or of Pelcombe's future strategic direction. An explanation of the company's objectives is now part of the staff induction process, but this has yet to make an impact. The staff's lack of awareness of strategic objectives was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

13. There is poor management of data. Monthly data reports are provided for regional and centre managers, but these are not analysed adequately or used effectively to plan future strategy or management decisions. Some directors are unsure whether all staff have a clear understanding of data. Pelcombe works to contractual targets. It does not systematically set its own targets for retention or achievement rates, based upon the analysis of trends and performance across the company. There is no evidence of a company strategy for improving retention, achievement and progression rates. Staff are not set individual retention and achievement targets. Meetings about data are insufficiently thorough, the decisions are ineffectively monitored at subsequent meetings, and action points and deadlines for improvement are not set. Data on unit achievement, additional qualifications, additional learning support and the completion of individual learning plans are not collected effectively to inform managers about learners' progress and value added. Some ineffective use of management information systems was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

14. Pelcombe's internal communication is poor. Each training centre manager has different arrangements for scheduling meetings. Team meetings are used to communicate locally. Meetings beyond centre level are not part of a formal schedule. Board meetings are not recorded. Meetings between directors, regional managers and training centre managers have only recently been introduced. Training centre managers regularly meet regional managers, but these meetings are not recorded. Where meetings are minuted, minutes do not always include agreed action points, timescales or allocation of responsibilities. Some training centres have little communication with staff at head office. Some training centre staff were working independently from the company's headquarters and said they felt isolated. There is little evidence of staff having individual meetings with their centre manager. Most staff do not know how their individual job responsibilities contribute to the company's objectives or future strategy. The manager of one training centre reports directly to the directors at Colchester, mainly by telephone. No director has visited this centre for three months. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between sites or between staff working on the same programmes. There is a new quality improvement team which intend to promote the sharing of good practice. However, this team is still at the development stage and has only held a few meetings. Pelcombe has recently introduced a newsletter, which includes a section on the sharing of good practice. Only two editions have so far been distributed.

15. Pelcombe has recently appointed a staff training and development manager. Before this, no one had overall responsibility for staff training and development. The staff training and development manager has started to meet regional and centre managers to identify priority areas for development, and has set up a database of individual staff training records. However, there has been no training needs analysis for all staff. There is no company training plan. Training requests are not co-ordinated, and are approved and managed both locally and centrally. There are no effective mechanisms for monitoring the overall impact of staff training and development. A new appraisal system has recently been introduced, and training has been provided on this. However, the appraisal form does not clearly measure the effectiveness of the member of staff's contribution to Pelcombe's training and learning activities. There are no links between the appraisal form and the new training observation form. Individual objectives agreed during the appraisal process have no link with the objectives in the company's business plan.

16. There is inadequate management of additional learning support. Pelcombe has recently appointed a basic skills co-ordinator and introduced a basic skills discussion group as part of its new quality assurance initiatives. However, there is no overall strategy for the management of additional learning support across the company. Some learners are not given an initial assessment. Some learners who have had an initial assessment have not received appropriate additional support. There is too much reliance on non-specialist tutors and assessors supporting learners with additional support needs. Some learners with specific learning difficulties are not receiving support from specialist staff. In some centres, literacy and numeracy assessments are being carried out, but plans of learning are not being formulated as a result. There is

insufficient recording of the additional learning support provided and insufficient associated target setting.

## **Equality of opportunity**

## **Contributory grade 3**

17. Pelcombe has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. There is also an equal opportunities policy statement and an equality statement. The statements are updated annually and supported by detailed procedures covering issues such as complaints, grievances and harassment. Learners receive equal opportunities awareness training as part of their induction and most have an understanding of the key issues. Equality of opportunity is monitored as part of the learners' review process. The new staff training and development manager is responsible for equal opportunities, although it is not included in his job description. He introduced staff training in equal opportunities in December 2002. This is now compulsory for all staff. The training sessions are also being used as a forum for generating ideas and discussion about the new equal opportunities team, set up to improve the company's focus on equality of opportunity.

18. Pelcombe has used consultants to provide advice on equal opportunities issues. There are positive initiatives in some centres. For example, the Luton and Bedford centres participate in a local project for racial harmony and produce calendars celebrating cultural diversity. Pelcombe's managing director is a member of a local ethnic training and employment group. Pelcombe staff have also worked with Jobcentre Plus to discuss equal opportunities strategies, such as meeting the needs of asylum seekers.

19. Pelcombe has particularly effective complaints procedures and this strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Complaints that arise are dealt with quickly and effectively. Staff, learners and employers have a good understanding of the complaints procedure. It is highlighted in the learners' handbook provided at induction. One learner reported a racial discrimination incident and by the end of the day the centre had fully investigated the incident and taken full and appropriate action. All complaints are reported centrally and they are analysed every three months to identify trends and plan improvement. Summaries are produced of action taken. The quality and standards director can be reached by mobile telephone so that any issues can be reported directly to him.

20. Most training centres have good access for people with limited mobility, and there is additional equipment available to support learners and staff with disabilities. There are, however, three centres with no accessible toilets and three which are completely inaccessible to people with mobility difficulties. There have been reasonable adjustments in some centres to meet the needs of learners. Pelcombe provides transport for learners to attend interviews and training centres. However, not all training centre staff are aware of the transport arrangements.

21. There is inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities. Some employers interviewed had no equal opportunities policy but this had not been dealt with by the monitoring procedures. Some employers and subcontractors interviewed were not aware of their responsibilities to the learners with regard to equal opportunities. There were examples in some work placements of inappropriate materials being displayed. Equal opportunities data for staff and learners are collected during the initial stages of recruitment, although

the data on learners are not always adequate. Equal opportunities data are not analysed or used effectively across the company to identify and target under-represented groups, or monitor learners' retention and achievement rates. Some staff do not know whether equality data are being analysed. Pelcombe has not set any equality and diversity targets.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 4

22. Pelcombe is committed to raising the profile of quality assurance within the company. New continuous improvement measures have been effectively co-ordinated and implemented across the company. An additional quality assurance manager has been appointed, and responsibility for quality assurance and standards across the company has been allocated to a director. A new quality assurance manual was distributed to all training centres in November 2002. It contains updates of company policies and procedures and new continuous improvement measures. The new manual is clear and comprehensive, and focuses more specifically on the learners' experience. The observation of training and a new communications policy are among the new continuous improvement measures. The new training observation form includes good criteria for assessing training and for feeding back to staff to improve their performance. The learners' feedback system has been improved significantly and questionnaires are now being distributed at the entry, on-programme and exit stages. Staff training has begun on the new continuous improvement initiatives.

23. Pelcombe produced its fourth self-assessment report in April 2002. The staff are not all fully aware of the contents of the report. The report is insufficiently thorough. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses in all areas of learning and in leadership and management. However, as part of the new continuous improvement initiatives, the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report have been analysed carefully and effectively, and used to bring about continuous improvement. Pelcombe is working on its next self-assessment report. The quality managers are working well with staff from each training centre to ensure that the new report is detailed and will be used to produce development plans and make improvements. Self-assessment reports and development plans from the training centres are reviewed centrally. Those which are insufficiently self-critical are discussed further with appropriate centre staff. Training centres have already started to use development plans effectively to record and monitor progress and set targets. The quality managers visit the centres to review development plans and other associated evidence. For example, they interview staff, learners and employers and analyse the outcomes of external monitoring visits. Each centre is risk-banded in accordance with the outcomes of these visits, and follow-up visits are scheduled accordingly. Thirteen visits have taken place so far. Staff interviewed stated that they had found the visits extremely valuable in targeting areas for improvement. Quality circles have also recently been introduced to improve priority development areas. However, these have yet to make an impact.

24. Pelcombe's quality assurance is poor. The quality assurance procedures do not focus sufficiently on improving learners' achievement. There are ineffective arrangements for assuring the quality of induction, initial assessment and learners' progress reviews. Different training centres and regions follow different procedures and practices. There is insufficient co-ordination of activities such as key skills, basic skills and internal verification. Activities have evolved separately in different parts of the company. There is no systematic observation of the training and learning taking place across the company or given by subcontractors. Quality assurance arrangements do not take sufficient



account of the results of external monitoring visits, or actively involve the learners, staff, employers and subcontractors.

25. The agreements and monitoring arrangements with subcontractors and employers are inadequate. Pelcombe uses three levels of agreements with subcontractors, depending on the level of service provided. A purchase order acts as an agreement for subcontractors delivering short courses. Agreements do not adequately define training responsibilities, targets, the quality of staff required, who is responsible for additional support or the record-keeping requirements. Some subcontractors do not have any written agreement. Employers are monitored locally by appropriate training centres. Some employers are not aware of having any agreements with Pelcombe, or of their responsibilities for training, health and safety and equal opportunities. Some employers interviewed want to work more effectively with Pelcombe. They are not involved in learners' progress reviews or the self-assessment process. In most cases, Pelcombe does not organise regular meetings with employers and subcontractors as part of a formal monitoring process. There is no formal process for monitoring the quality and impact of training provided by most subcontractors and employers. For example, one subcontractor provides a four-day lift truck training programme for novices. The Road Transport Industrial Training Board recommends a minimum of five days for novice learners.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	27	3

26. Pelcombe has 27 learners on work-based learning programmes for young people in engineering. Learners come from the areas around Colchester and Ipswich. There are 18 advanced modern apprentices, seven foundation modern apprentices and two learners on NVQ training. Most learners are recruited onto the programmes shortly after gaining employment with local engineering companies. Some learners join Pelcombe and attend a training centre before they find a work placement with an engineering employer. The employers include companies which manufacture ventilation equipment, service and repair audio and video equipment, assemble electrical control panels and service and repair motor vehicles. Most learners receive induction information from Pelcombe's staff during an initial visit to their workplace. Reviews of learners' progress are given in the workplace by one of the two engineering assessors. Both assessors are experienced engineering trainers and they hold relevant assessors' and internal verifiers' qualifications. Modern apprentices attend one of two local colleges of further education on day release to work towards certificates in vocational education. During the course of their training, some advanced modern apprentices progress onto higher national certificate courses. Training in this area of learning under New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults was not inspected.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		8		9		7		8		5					
Retained*	0		0	0	4	44	1	14	7	88	4	80				
Successfully completed	0		0	0	1	11	1	14	3	38	3	60				
Still in learning	3		7	88	6	67	1	14	1	12	0	100				

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		21		39		24		40							
Retained*	0		1	5	10	26	5	21	13	32						
Successfully completed	0		0	0	3	8	3	12	11	28						
Still in learning	2		2	10	3	8	0	0	0	0						

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	3		2		12		21		33							
Retained*	0		0	0	2		10	48	19	58						
Successfully completed	0		0	0	2		7	33	18	55						
Still in learning	2		0	100	0		0	0	0	100						

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

## STRENGTHS

- frequent and effective assessment in the workplace
- good range of learning opportunities in the workplace
- good use of workplace evidence for assessment of key skills

## WEAKNESSES

- poor rates of achievement by foundation modern apprentices
- insufficient involvement of workplace supervisors in NVQ training and assessment

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more assessment by direct observation of level 3 NVQ learners
- increased frequency of internal verification of level 3 NVQ work

27. Learners benefit significantly from frequent and effective assessment sessions in the workplace. Pelcombe assessors visit learners in their work placements at least once a month. The assessors take particular care to develop learners' understanding of the terminology used in the NVQ units. Learners in the early stages of their apprenticeship are given clear guidance on the type of evidence required for meeting the NVQ competence statements. As they progress through their programme they are able to identify and develop written evidence of relevant workplace activity. Assessors examine learners' written evidence thoroughly and test their background knowledge. Assessors have developed a good knowledge of the resources and processes at each work placement and they use this knowledge effectively when assessing the learners and setting targets. At each visit, there is an assessment review. This provides clear targets for learners to achieve by the next review. Each review document identifies the learners' progress, in terms of unit achievement, the NVQ, key skills and college courses. Learners value the support received from assessors during the assessment sessions. The assessment of level 3 NVQ work is dominated by the use of written evidence. Little use is made of assessment by direct observation.

28. Internal verification is satisfactorily planned, and results in written feedback to the assessor. The internal verification process is dominated by examination of portfolios but also includes direct observation of an assessor's performance. Internal verification of assessed work in level 3 NVQ portfolios is done early in the programme and again when the portfolio is complete. This is not often enough. The assessors and internal verifiers meet to ensure that they are familiar with any changes made by the awarding body or actions requested by the external verifier.

29. The work placements provide an extensive range of learning opportunities. The initial stages of training require the learners to work alongside skilled practitioners. In the larger companies, learners are given a basic understanding of workshop practices by taking part in short work placements in various sections of the production plant. Learners are able to develop the practical skills and understanding required for achievement of the level 2 NVQ. In a few cases learners do supplementary training on specialist off-the-job resources. Learners on level 3 NVQs are given the responsibility of working alone on a wide variety of production tasks. Some level 3 learners work on technical tasks on customers' premises. The level of technical work done by some learners in electrical and electronic engineering is complex.

30. Assessment of key skills makes good use of a wide range of everyday evidence provided by learners. The primary focus of the assessment process is to identify evidence for the NVQ. At a subsequent stage this evidence is cross-referenced to the relevant key skills. In a few cases learners and assessors identify specific tasks in the

workplace that will provide key skills evidence. Some workplace supervisors are involved in providing key skills evidence for learners. Several learners do technical projects as part of their day-release courses. These projects are work-based and involve the production of technical reports and presentations for workplace managers. Efficient use is made of these tasks to produce good evidence of competence in key skills.

31. Workplace supervisors are not sufficiently involved in NVQ training and assessment. Most supervisors do not attend learners' progress and assessment reviews. The self-assessment report stated that employers are included in the review process wherever possible. Training in the workplace is not adequately planned. It meets the requirements of the employer rather than the NVQ. The assessor seldom discusses the outcomes of the progress review sessions with the supervisor. Supervisors rarely read and sign the written record of progress reviews. Supervisors are not adequately involved in the assessment of workplace evidence and do not endorse learners' written reports on workplace tasks. Supervisors are not asked to provide any written comments on the quality of learners' work. Some workplace supervisors would like to be more involved in assessment, others are content to leave all the NVQ work to the assessors.

32. The achievement rate for foundation modern apprentices is poor. Between 1998 and 2001, a total of 124 learners started foundation modern apprenticeships. Seventeen have completed their modern apprenticeship framework and five are still in training. Between 1997 and 2000, 29 learners started advanced modern apprenticeships. Eight have completed the apprenticeship framework and a further eight remain in training. In the past three years, only five learners have started an NVQ programme. Two of these learners are still in training and the other three left the programme without achieving the targets on their individual learning plan. The self-assessment report claimed that there were good achievement rates for young people on engineering programmes.

**Business administration, management & professional****Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	46	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	54	4

33. There are 107 learners on business administration programmes. Forty-six are on work-based learning for young people, of whom 35 are foundation modern apprentices, six are advanced modern apprentices and five are on NVQ programmes. There are 61 clients on New Deal and work-based learning for adults programmes. Of these, 54 are on New Deal 25+ and seven on New Deal 18-24. Because there were so few clients, New Deal 18-24 was not graded. Clients on New Deal are referred directly by Jobcentre Plus. Learners on work-based learning for young people are either referred by Connexions or directly from their employer. Business administration training takes place at 10 of Pelcombe's sites, predominantly in Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. Learners must attend training for at least 30 hours a week. Some spend all their time in Pelcombe's training centres, while others attend a work placement. Learners who are employed attend the training centre as required for additional training. Achievement on New Deal and work-based learning for adults programmes is measured in terms of gaining employment, and the focus of training is to increase employability. Achievement on work-based learning for young people is measured by the proportion of learners achieving either a full apprenticeship framework or an NVQ. All applicants are interviewed individually and given an initial assessment. Prior learning is accredited where appropriate. All learners receive an induction covering health and safety, equality of opportunity, attendance requirements, complaints procedures and their rights and responsibilities. Induction is carried out at the training centre or at their employer's premises.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			6		16		7		8		9					
Retained*			0	0	5	31	3	43	3	38	7	78				
Successfully completed			0	0	2	12	2	29	2	25	7	78				
Still in learning			3	50	2	12	1	14	0	0	0	0				

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	7		43		52		28		33							
Retained*	0		17	40	17	33	14	50	14	42						
Successfully completed	0		2	5	6	12	13	46	13	39						
Still in learning	7		20	47	8	15	0	0	0	0						

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		11		8		22		28		44					
Retained*	0		1	9	1	12	2	9	6	21	20	45				
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0	2	9	6	21	20	45				
Still in learning	4		0	0	1	12	0	0	0	0	0	0				

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults											
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults											
				2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000	
				No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts				97		205		143		156	
Retained*				37	38	97	47	83	58	116	74
Planned learning completed				1	1	0	0	71	50	93	60
Gained job				8	8	17	8	12	8	25	16
Still in training				53	55	1	0	0	0	0	0

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

New Deal 18-24										
New Deal 18-24										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	5		4							
Retained*	0	0	1	25						
Planned learning completed	0	0	0	0						
Gained job	1	20	0	0						
Still in training	4	80	3	75						

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- good range of key skills evidence
- good training for adults at the Ilford training centre

## WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rate
- low retention rate on work-based learning for young people
- insufficient resources in four centres in Cambridgeshire
- insufficient planning of learning

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of a range of assessment methods
- increased internal verification sampling

34. There is a good range of effective and practical support for learners. Learners value the level of support they receive. It assists their progress and helps them deal with personal problems. Staff adapt programmes in circumstances such as learners' absence through ill health, by arranging weekly visits to help learners maintain their progress on their return. Staff make strenuous efforts to help learners find employment, such as arranging transport and employment interviews. Pelcombe's close and constructive relationships with Jobcentre Plus staff are helpful to learners who want to extend their time on the programme to maximise their employment prospects.



35. Modern apprentices produce a good range of key skills evidence. Learners are encouraged to choose work-related topics such as the history of their organisation, or a subject they are particularly interested in. One learner who was purchasing a house researched and analysed different types of mortgages and the local housing market. She wrote to and emailed estate agents and building societies, and described a dialogue with her partner about the level of their bid. Projects are of a high standard and clearly demonstrate learners' interest and enthusiasm. There is good use of evidence drawn directly from the learners' NVQ work.

36. At the Ilford training centre, inspectors observed learners taking IT training in addition to their administration NVQ units. The training observed was of good quality. Business administration training is well organised at all the training centres, and is supported by detailed lesson plans, schemes of work and well-prepared learning materials. Good use is made of resources to aid learning. A wide range of training techniques is used to meet learners' learning preferences. Learners on short courses make rapid progress and report increased self-confidence. The tutor successfully uses a wide range of experience to support learners, and they also support one another. Learners use industry standard software and equipment, and are given clear and appropriate training manuals and handouts.

37. Achievement rates are low on youth and adult programmes. Retention rates on youth programmes are low. Between 1998 and 2001, only 13 per cent of adults on Jobcentre Plus programmes gained employment. Learners are not given job-seeking targets. They complete weekly logs but these are not analysed to determine appropriate activity levels.

38. Between 1997-98 and 2000-01, only 30 per cent of foundation modern apprentices completed their modern apprenticeship frameworks. Retention rates for foundation modern apprentices range from 50 to 33 per cent. Of the 43 who started in 2001, 20 are still in learning. Between 1997-98 and 2000-01, only 32.5 per cent of advanced modern apprentices completed their modern apprenticeship framework. Of the 16 who started in 2000, two are still in learning. The retention rate for advanced modern apprentices declined from 78 per cent in 1997-98 to 31 per cent in 2000-01. Of the six who started in 2001-02, three are still in training. On other youth programmes, between 1998-99 and 2001-02, only 25 per cent of learners completed an NVQ, and the retention rate declined from 45 per cent in 1997-98 to just 9 per cent in 2001-02.

39. Four new training centres established during the past year have insufficient resources to meet the needs of learners. Late allocation of an assessor has delayed both assessment and achievement of qualifications. Shortages of staff during a recruitment phase of six months resulted in learners' progress reviews being missed. Seven learners in three training centres have made no progress towards achieving their qualifications, despite being on the programme for up to six months. Some of the computers are unreliable, and there are too few for the number of learners. There are inadequate learning resources to support learners in developing knowledge and understanding. Work placements are not provided at three of the training centres. Where learners are

placed with employers, they have not been visited regularly in the workplace for assessment or progress reviews. Assessment is carried out by an assessor from another centre but this has not yet improved learners' progress. Some learners are concerned that they may not complete their qualifications within the prescribed timescales. The company has responded to requests for additional computers and there are plans to relocate surplus equipment to these centres. Pelcombe's other established centres have sufficient resources to meet the needs of learners.

40. Learning is insufficiently planned for learners to achieve all the targets on their individual learning plan within the prescribed timescales. Initial assessment is carried out thoroughly, but the information gathered is not used in learning plans. Many modern apprentices make slow progress. Late introduction of key skills training and assessment has contributed to this. Recent evidence shows that key skills training is now more closely integrated with the vocational assessment. Employers are not involved in identifying how gaps in training can be dealt with. There are insufficient work placements for adults. There is effective accreditation of learners' previous achievements. Assessment practices are satisfactory, but assessment by direct observation is seldom used. There are too few work placements for learners on Jobcentre Plus programmes. Internal verification is adequate but the size of sample is small.

41. No one person is responsible for co-ordinating additional support for business administration learners. Two learners have additional support needs. All but one of the training centres visited carry out an initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy. In the absence of a co-ordinator, training staff arrange appropriate support from colleagues who have may have experience and knowledge of the area. One member of staff arranged literacy training for a learner by integrating him with a Life Skills group. Another learner received additional support from a jobsearch tutor which improved his letter writing and spelling. Details of individual support provided are not systematically recorded on learning plans or progress review paperwork.

**Retailing, customer service & transportation****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	46	4
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	99	3

42. There are 99 clients on work-based learning for adults programmes. There are also six clients on a New Deal 18-24 programme but this was not inspected. Adult clients are referred for training by Jobcentre Plus. Thirty-three adult clients are on short job focused training (SJFT) and 47 on longer occupational training (LOT). Sixteen are on a routeway programme. Most adult clients are on lift truck training, with some on light goods vehicle or other driving courses. Adult clients on the routeway programme are gaining work experience in retailing or warehousing but not working towards a particular qualification. The programmes last for between two and 26 weeks. Clients receive an induction at Pelcombe's training centre, followed by jobsearch and occupational training. Employment is the key objective of the training. All the lift truck and other transport training is subcontracted to specialist providers.

43. There are 46 young people on work-based learning programmes in retailing or customer service. Nine are advanced modern apprentices, 16 are foundation modern apprentices and 21 are NVQ learners. They are recruited from employers, or referred by Connexions or Jobcentre Plus. Induction and initial assessment take place either at a training centre or in the workplace. Learners' workplaces include hairdressers, fashion and sports stores and other retailers. Learners have a nominated assessor.

44. There are seven training centres for this area of learning, three provide both programmes, and the others only offer the adult programme. Jobsearch facilities are available at all the centres. All learners have an individual learning plan and receive progress reviews.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		6		5		5				1					
Retained*	0		0	0	1	20	1	20			1	100				
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0	0	0			1	100				
Still in learning	3		4	67	2	40	0	0			0	0				

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	7		19		25		8		4							
Retained*	0		3	16	5	20	1	12	2	50						
Successfully completed	0		0	0	2	8	0	0	1	25						
Still in learning	5		5	26	6	24	0	0	0	0						

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	12		39		2		3				2					
Retained*	1		9	23	0	0	1	33			1	50				
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0	0	0			1	50				
Still in learning	10		11	28	0	0	0	0			0	0				

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	379		769		103		5		4	
Retained*	196	52	445	58	71	69	2	40	2	50
Planned learning completed	0	0	0	0	8	8	1	20	2	50
Gained job	91	24	174	23	22	21	1	20	2	50
Still in training	87	23	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## STRENGTHS

- good achievement rate for lift truck qualifications
- good support for learners
- good jobsearch resources
- effective additional computer training and qualifications for learners at one centre

## WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement and retention rates on programmes of work-based learning for young people
- poor planning of training for some learners
- ineffective reviews of some learners' progress
- unsatisfactory induction process

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more systematic updating of individual learning plans
- better initial vocational assessment

45. The achievement rate for learners on the lift truck programme is good. Of those learners who started the course, 76 per cent have successfully completed the counterbalance qualification, and some have also achieved the reach qualification. This achievement is helped by the commitment and support of the subcontracted trainers, and the availability of sufficient physical resources and learning materials. Learners have

access to videos, booklets and handouts, which focus particularly on health and safety. Most subcontractors have a well-structured timetable supported by lesson plans which are used flexibly to meet learners' needs. On the other transport programmes, the achievement rate is less than 40 per cent. The proportion of learners gaining employment during the current contract year is 36 per cent, which shows an improvement on previous years.

46. There is good support for all learners. This strength was not identified in the self assessment report. All subcontractors, employers and Pelcombe's staff are providing good supervision and coaching to help build learners' confidence and skills. Work placements are arranged for some learners. Mentors are sometimes used to help learners settle in to the workplace. Learners are also helped to find suitable employment. Hackney carriage learners are helped to arrange finance for the purchase of a black cab, once they have passed their specialist knowledge test. The subcontractor contributes £450 towards the cost of a new cab. Pelcombe's staff have very good working relationships with local companies, and frequent and regular contact with learners. Learning resources in the training centres are satisfactory, with learners being able to enjoy a pleasant working environment. Learners on transport programmes are self-motivated and eager to do well. Most learners state that their confidence and self-esteem has improved since joining Pelcombe. All learners interviewed said that their programme was fulfilling their vocational needs and, in many cases, had exceeded their expectations. All appreciate the encouragement, help and support that they receive. Several former learners on transport programmes have written to staff at Pelcombe expressing their appreciation and thanks for the help and support given to them. One learner's benefits were reinstated after Pelcombe staff were able to support his appeal by providing accurate records to confirm the claim.

47. There are good resources for jobsearch. This was identified in the self assessment report. Centres make separate rooms available which are pleasant and well furnished. Access is timetabled but learners are also able to drop in to use the facilities. A good range of up-to-date newspapers and periodicals is available to learners. All learners have access to facilities including computers, the Internet, telephones, fax machines, stationery, photocopiers and stamps. Additional training is available to support learners in writing curriculum vitae, interpreting job adverts, interview techniques, writing letters and improving their IT skills. There is a structured timetable supported by learning resources in some centres. Guidance is given on completing application forms. Learners are encouraged to photocopy application forms and practise on the copies before filling in the original application. Those learners who find it difficult to attend interviews because of poor public transport arrangements are given lifts by staff. The success of learners who gain employment is celebrated in one centre, with their names listed in a roll of honour. Jobsearch achievement is not monitored in some centres. At the Colchester centre there was no information available about the jobsearch activities of learners on the transport programme.

48. At the Colchester training centre learners are taking the opportunity to enhance their computer skills, and in some cases are achieving a basic computer literacy

qualification. On the SJFT programme, clients attend computer training on three days a week for five weeks in addition to the one-week course in lift truck driving. This helps develop their skills in using spreadsheets, which improves their employment prospects. So far, 30 clients have achieved a basic computer literacy qualification. In September 2002, Pelcombe introduced an in-house certificate to credit the experience gained by those clients who were unable to achieve the basic computer literacy qualification. Alongside the development of these skills, clients are using the internet for jobsearch.

49. The achievement and retention rates for young people on work-based learning programmes are poor. Over the past four years, 20 learners have started an advanced modern apprenticeship programme but none has yet completed successfully. Over the same period, 59 learners have started foundation modern apprenticeships but only two have successfully achieved their qualification. Of 56 learners who started an NVQ programme, none has yet achieved the qualification. Some learners have made slow progress during their programme. In a few cases key skills training and assessment have been introduced late. One learner completed an NVQ in July 2002 before starting on key skills, and has yet to achieve the key skills qualification. There are signs of improvements with learners making progress and completing units of their qualifications, which in turn increases their motivation.

50. There is poor planning of training for some learners. Those not on lift truck or other transport programmes do not have a formal structured training programme. For many learners who are employed or on a work placement, learning is by doing the job. When learners do gain workplace experience it is not recorded. There is little off-the-job vocational training. Some employers' structured training is linked with the learners' programme, but there is not enough co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Many adult learners do not take part in work experience or work placements while they are on their programme. There are some learning support materials available for retailing, but these are not always used. Learners who have additional learning needs receive extra support but there is inadequate planning and recording of this to ensure their needs are met. Although initial assessment takes place, this does not always include matching the learners' job with the NVQ requirements, or involving the workplace manager.

51. Learners' progress reviews do not always take place in accordance with Pelcombe's policy. The reviews are mainly pastoral. They do not set challenging targets for completion of individual NVQ units. They do not always record learners' progress or changes to their programme. Records of meetings between assessors and learners are recorded on an action-planning and feedback form. They do not always include clear timescales for completion of planned work. Meetings with learners do not follow up on previously agreed activities. Learners are not sufficiently aware of their progress towards completing their modern apprenticeship framework. Individual learning plans are not always updated to reflect learners' progress or changes to their circumstances.

52. Learners' induction is not satisfactory. This was not identified in the self assessment report. Induction is not planned. In one observed session the trainer appeared unfamiliar with the induction handbook. Health and safety arrangements for the training

centre were not explained to learners at the beginning of the session. The session was disjointed and learners seemed bored by the induction process. At the Bedford training centre induction takes place in an open room shared with other learning groups. In the observed session, there were constant distractions from ringing telephones and people moving around the room. Learners were not able to concentrate on the induction process. Some learners have their induction in the workplace. It is brief, and one learner described being simply given an induction pack to read, with little explanation by their assessor. The review process provides some reinforcement of induction topics throughout the learners' programme.



**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel****Grade 5**

<b>Programmes inspected</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
Work-based learning for young people	41	5

53. There are 41 learners on hospitality programmes, of whom 11 are advanced modern apprentices, 28 are foundation modern apprentices and two are on NVQ programmes. Most learners live and work in the Colchester area and all are recruited through their employers. They work for organisations ranging from private businesses to large multinational companies, in public houses, fast-food outlets, bowling alleys, hotels, restaurants and care homes. Learners can start the programme at any time of the year. Assessors carry out regular performance and progress reviews. There are two tutor/assessors, both of whom have relevant occupational experience and have, or are working towards, their assessor qualifications. All training towards the vocational and key skills units takes place in the workplace. Training for the foundation food safety programme takes place at Pelcombe's training centre. The internal verification is subcontracted to a peripatetic internal verifier.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		2		12		11		5		4					
Retained*	0		0	0	4	33	3	27	2	40	0					
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20	0					
Still in learning	2		1	50	4	33	3	27	1	20	0					

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	16		22		20		6									
Retained*	0		8	36	12	60	3	50								
Successfully completed	0		2	9	3	15	2	33								
Still in learning	15		6	27	6	30	1	17								

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	1		23						37							
Retained*	0		9	39					22	59						
Successfully completed	0		5	22					20	54						
Still in learning	1		1	4					0	0						

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

## STRENGTHS

- good opportunities for progress in the workplace

## WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates
- inadequate planning of training
- inadequate training resources
- lack of systematic initial assessment for all learners
- invalid assessment in housekeeping programme

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better recording of supplementary evidence
- more frequent updating of individual learning plans

54. Learners make good progress at work. Some learners employed in fast-food outlets have progressed from a level 2 NVQ programme to a supervisory level 3 NVQ and are now working as supervisors. Employers support these learners. Work placements are appropriate and of a good standard. There is a good range of learning opportunities in the workplace.

55. Retention and achievement rates are poor. The retention rate for advanced modern apprentices was 40 per cent in 1998-99, 27 per cent in 1999-2000 and 33 per cent in 2000-01. The retention rate for foundation modern apprentices was 50 per cent in 1999-2000, 60 per cent in 2000-01 and 36 per cent in 2001-02. Retention of learners on NVQ programmes was 59 per cent in 1998-99, and 39 per cent in 2001-02. Some learners make slow progress towards achieving their qualifications. Many do not complete their NVQs or key skills qualifications within the targeted timescales. Many learners have been on programmes for over six months without completing an NVQ unit. Learners recruited since October 2002 have begun key skills training at the start of their programme, and some aspects of key skills are now assessed by observation at the same time as NVQ units. Clear targets for learners' NVQ progress are not communicated to their employers. Some targets agreed between the learners and assessors are not specific enough. Individual learning plans are not updated to take account of learners' progress, achievement or change of employment. There is no overall record of changes to target dates or recording of additional qualifications.

56. Assessors visit the learners frequently in their workplaces to carry out progress reviews and observed assessments. Assessors record details of the observed activity and the learners' competences. There are no work-based assessors. There is insufficient use of witness statements. The next planned assessment visit is agreed with the learner but the action planned is not recorded in enough detail to enable learners to progress and achieve. Most learners' progress reviews take place every eight weeks. However, the targets set and the written comments do not give learners enough guidance on how they can improve their performance and make progress with their qualification. Employers are not involved in the review process. They are asked to comment on the learners' progress after the review has taken place, and without the learner present. Other evidence produced by learners is not properly recorded in their portfolios of evidence.

57. There is no off-the-job training for the NVQs or key skills units and there is insufficient planning of on-the-job training. During the past 12 months, there have been two half-day off-the-job training sessions for learners at two employers. These sessions covered IT software applications but not the skills and knowledge required for the IT key

skills units. There are no training plans for on-the-job training, and training carried out by employers is coincidental to the learners' programme. Assessors are not always aware of specific on-the-job training carried out by employers. There is no planned training for external key skills tests. Employers and workplace supervisors are not fully involved in the learners' programmes and many consider the NVQ programme to be totally separate from any in-house training.

58. Internal verification is subcontracted and takes place throughout the learners' programme. There are no sampling plans showing the units, the range of assessment methods, or the assessors to be verified. The hospitality internal verifier does not attend Pelcombe's internal verifiers' meetings and does not receive minutes from these meetings. Communication between the assessors and the internal verifier is good but informal, and is not recorded.

59. There are inadequate training resources for NVQ and key skills learners. Learners are not given resources that will enable them to extend their knowledge and skills. Knowledge packs covering some aspects of drink service and of fish preparation are given to some learners. These packs are not linked to the NVQ units and do not test the learners' knowledge. Some learners are advised by tutors to use the Internet for research.

60. Initial assessment is not used to identify the appropriate level of programme for each learner or to plan individual training needs. There is no systematic accreditation of prior experience or learning. Learners are all given the same length of time to achieve their modern apprenticeship framework regardless of their previous experience or their job role. Some learners take initial basic skills and key skills tests in their workplace. Despite this, assessors do not identify learners who require basic skills support. Learners are not always made aware of their performance in these tests. Learners' IT skills and knowledge are not tested. Some learners receive a brief introduction to their programme which covers health and safety, equal opportunities and the structure of the NVQ portfolio. This takes place in the workplace and lasts up to one and a half hours.

61. Seven learners have been recruited onto a housekeeping programme for which the centre does not have awarding body approval. The assessor and internal verifier are not experienced or qualified to assess and verify learners in this occupational area. The learners have been in learning for nine weeks.

## Hairdressing & beauty therapy

## Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	46	3

62. There are 13 advanced modern apprentices, 32 foundation modern apprentices and one NVQ learner on programmes of work-based learning for young people in hairdressing. Forty four of the learners are employed. All practical training is given in the workplace. Pelcombe has a partnership arrangement with one hairdressing salon group. The salon provides assessors to coach and assess learners who are in training in other salons outside its area. Learners attend the training centre for one day every two weeks for background knowledge training in key skills and hairdressing. Learners are recruited directly by the salons or referred for training by Connexions. Initial assessment takes place at the beginning of the programme, and incorporates a key skills test. Learners may join the programme at any time throughout the year. A short induction is given to learners in their workplace. One full-time member of staff is employed by Pelcombe to co-ordinate training, conduct reviews, and provide some key skills training and assessment and additional learning support. A part-time member of staff gives training in background knowledge once a fortnight. There are 17 salon-based assessors and five internal verifiers. All training staff hold appropriate vocational and assessors' qualifications. Six more members of staff are working towards their assessors' qualifications.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			5		8		12		18							
Retained*			0	0	4	50	6	50	8	44						
Successfully completed			0	0	1	12	0	0	3	17						
Still in learning			5	100	2	25	4	33	2	11						

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	12		20		22		15		11							
Retained*	0		6	30	10	45	6	40	4	36						
Successfully completed	0		0	0	4	18	5	33	2	18						
Still in learning	12		12	60	7	32	1	7	0	0						

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97		1995-96	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts							1									
Retained*							1	100								
Successfully completed							0	0								
Still in learning							1	100								

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

## STRENGTHS

- good pastoral and vocational support for learners
- good standard of practical hairdressing skills
- effective involvement of employers in training

## WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates
- slow implementation of key skills training and assessment

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better recording of assessment
- more involvement of employers in the review process
- better use of individual learning plans to target unit achievement

63. Learners receive good support. Assessors visit them in their workplace once a fortnight to support them with their written and portfolio work. Learners speak positively about the support they receive. They all have the mobile telephone number of the training co-ordinator, and are encouraged to use it if they need support or help with their studies, even in the evenings and at weekends. Assessors respond positively to learners' requests. Some learners work at salons some distance from Pelcombe's training centres. A minibus is provided to collect them from their home town and take them to the training centre for off-the-job training sessions. The attendance rate at these sessions is good. The training co-ordinator has recently been provided with a laptop computer to extend learners' opportunities of using IT in their work placement.

64. Learners display a good standard of practical work. They work confidently with customers and many show a good standard of skill early in their programmes. All salons offer learners additional practical training sessions to help them improve their skills. Some learners have the opportunity to participate in external training events or to extend their knowledge of the industry by attending external trade fairs and exhibitions.

65. Pelcombe effectively involves employers in training. Employers speak positively of the good support and guidance they receive. Salon owners have been encouraged to gain assessors qualifications so they can assess learners in the salon. This strategy has been very successful, and all learners are placed in salons where staff hold or are working towards their assessors qualifications. Communication is good and salon assessors are invited to attend assessors' meetings. The attendance rate at the meetings is good and when assessors are unable to attend they are sent the minutes of the meetings and copies of any action plans.

66. Achievement rates are poor. Since 1998-99, achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices have not exceeded 17 per cent and for foundation modern apprentices they have not exceeded 33 per cent. The achievement rate for NVQs has been less than 37 per cent at level 2 and 29 per cent at level 3 during this period. Retention rates, although low, have risen from 44 to 50 per cent on the advanced modern apprenticeship programme and from 36 to 44 per cent on the foundation modern apprenticeship programme.

67. There has been some achievement of key skills qualifications. However, staffing problems have meant that there was no key skills training for 10 months during 2001-02. A new member of staff has been appointed to co-ordinate the training programme and to teach and assess key skills. Much work has been done to improve the key skills training, but many learners who have reached the end of their programme are only just starting on their key skills qualification. The accreditation of prior qualifications to exempt learners from key skills tests has only just begun. Little work has been done on preparing learners for the external tests.

68. All learners take an initial assessment in key skills to identify any additional learning support needs. Results are recorded on individual learning plans along with details of specific areas of support needed. Good individual support is provided for learners at

their workplaces. Clear records are kept of learners' progress. A small number of learners are assessed as having severe learning difficulties. There are no resources to help these learners improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Staff work hard to help these learners, but do not have the skills or experience to help them progress. They are making poor progress towards achieving the written components of their NVQ.

69. Learners' progress is reviewed frequently. The training co-ordinator visits learners in their salon every eight weeks. The review focuses on their progress to date, and sets targets. However, there is insufficient emphasis on reviewing learners' progress against the targets set at the previous review. There are target dates for unit achievement in individual learning plans, but these are not used effectively in reviews to measure progress. In some cases, employers are not involved in the review. They are asked to sign and make comments on the review paperwork, but are not made sufficiently aware of the targets their learner has been set.

70. Internal verification procedures are satisfactory. Sampling processes cover all learners and all assessors. The procedures are thorough. Assessors are given feedback on their performance and where appropriate, internal verifiers clearly indicate actions to be taken. These are promptly complied with. Practical assessments accurately measure learners' performance against awarding body criteria. However, the paperwork used does not give the assessors enough space to record each assessed performance. Assessors do not always clearly record that the learners have achieved all the performance criteria.

#### Good Practice

*One learner who had suffered with poor health and attendance at school was referred to Pelcombe by Connexions. The training co-ordinator negotiated a reduced working week with a salon so that the learner could follow her chosen career while she was recovering from her long-term illness. The learner is successfully maintaining good attendance and punctuality and is making good progress towards achieving her qualification.*

#### Poor Practice

*One work-placement salon that has a partnership arrangement with Pelcombe has poor facilities at its training school. The learners' rest and private study area is used as a general storage area by the salon, with boxes stacked dangerously around the room. A computer monitor was placed precariously on top of cardboard boxes. The learners have no cloakroom facilities and put their coats and bags on the tables and chairs, leaving them nowhere to sit. Too many customers were booked into the practical salon at one time, making it difficult for learners to work professionally and safely.*



## Health, social care & public services

## Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	29	4

71. Pelcombe offers training in care and early years care and education. It has 31 learners on care programmes of work-based learning for young people. Five are advanced, and 16 are foundation modern apprentices. Ten are working towards NVQs in care. There are seven clients on New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, following programmes in early years care. Because there are so few clients on this programme, no contributory grade was given for it.

72. Learners on work-based learning programmes for young people are recruited to care training through the local Connexions service, or are already employed. At the start of their training, all the learners have an induction, which includes health and safety awareness, an introduction to equal opportunities, an outline of the programme framework and an initial assessment of their basic numeracy and literacy skills. Most training takes place in the workplace. Key skills training is given at Pelcombe's training centres.

73. All care learners have regular progress reviews. A tutor visits them at least once each month. Learners with additional learning needs are offered individual tutorials and support each week at the training centre. All the learners are employed or have placements in residential or nursing homes.

74. There are two members of staff responsible for the NVQ and modern apprenticeship programmes in care, one of whom has only been in post since September 2002. Both have occupational experience and hold, or are working towards, relevant qualifications. Care learners are inducted to their training programmes by Pelcombe's staff, and to the workplace by their employer. Those who require additional support with basic skills are offered extra individual tutorial support by the vocational tutor/assessors. Internal verification in care programmes is provided by two subcontracted members of staff. Following advice from an external verifier, all completed NVQ units are currently being verified.

75. New Deal clients are referred for LOT in early years care by their Jobcentre Plus adviser. The training is subcontracted to another local training provider. The programme gives clients 26 weeks of work experience in local schools and day nurseries. They are also expected to work towards three units of an NVQ in early years care and education, and carry out jobsearch activities. Clients can join the programme at any time. All potential work placements are checked for compliance with health and safety regulations before clients are allocated to them. Clients are assessed by the subcontracted tutor/assessor. They have regular progress reviews and are visited in the workplace every six weeks. Jobsearch is a required element of the programme. Clients receive up to four hours of jobsearch support each week, which includes assistance

with writing curriculum vitae and letters, computer skills and making Internet searches. Pelcombe pays for postage and telephone calls relating to job applications, and provides folders, writing materials and writing paper.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			4		2		5									
Retained*			1	25	1	50	1	20								
Successfully completed			0	0	0	0	0	0								
Still in learning			3	75	1	50	1	20								

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		20		15		13		1							
Retained*	0		4	20	3	20	5	38	0	0						
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Still in learning	2		10	50	4	27	0	0	0	0						

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		12		3						2					
Retained*	0		3	25	1	33					0	0				
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0					0	0				
Still in learning	4		6	50	0	0					0	0				

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	13		17		6					
Retained*	5	38	6	35	2	33				
Planned learning completed	0	0	0	0	2	33				
Gained job	1	8	3	18	0	0				
Still in training	7	54	0	0	0	0				

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## STRENGTHS

- good supportive employers
- good progress on early years care programme

## WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rate on direct care programmes
- late introduction of key skills training
- insufficient involvement of supervisors in learners' progress reviews

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better planning of additional support for learners

76. Learners have good supportive employers. Employers understand the need for a qualified workforce and are enthusiastic about their employees' training. Many employers hold NVQs and some hold assessor qualifications. Most background knowledge training for the NVQ is given in the workplace by employers' staff. Employers arrange for learners to attend additional training sessions during working hours about clinical conditions and issues surrounding the care of older people.

77. Progress for learners on early years care programme is good. Of the six clients who undertook the LOT programme in 2002, two have gained employment and one is going on to higher education. A fourth client has interrupted her training due to pregnancy but intends to return and complete her NVQ, as a private candidate, after her baby is

born. Those clients who are retained for the planned duration of their training achieve at least three units of the NVQ.

78. There is a poor rate of achievement on direct care programmes. Few learners on the care programme have gained qualifications. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. Since 1997, no NVQ learner has completed the qualification. The first person to complete a foundation modern apprenticeship did so in December 2002, and is awaiting certification. Only seven of the 62 modern apprentices who have started programmes since 1996 have successfully completed the NVQ element of their training. Many learners have made slow progress. Twelve of the 42 foundation modern apprentices who started training since 1998 have failed to complete their training within the planned timescale. One advanced modern apprentice who started in 1999 is still in learning, as are four foundation modern apprentices who started in 2000. Some learners have been in training for up to a year without completing any NVQ units.

79. Key skills training is introduced late into learners' programmes. Key skills training for modern apprentices is provided by the vocational tutor/assessors at Pelcombe's training centre. However, it does not take place until after learners have completed their NVQ. Some learners have a poor understanding of what key skills are and how they will be assessed. They see key skills as a separate part of their training programme, and do not collect evidence from their workplace for their key skills portfolios. The key skills assignments are not related to learners' workplace activities. Workplace supervisors have little understanding of key skills and their role in the modern apprenticeship framework. Key skills are not assessed in the workplace. The tutor/assessors have received key skills training but do not feel confident to teach all the subjects. Since 1996, only two learners have completed the key skills elements of their training.

80. There is insufficient involvement of workplace supervisors in learners' progress reviews. Workplace supervisors are not always asked to contribute to learners' progress reviews. Few records of learners' progress reviews include comments from workplace supervisors. In many instances, the section on the review record form for workplace supervisors' comments is left blank. In a few cases, there are comments about the learners' work performance, but there are no records of any discussion about the learners' progress towards their qualification. On one record, a learner had requested that the tutor/assessor inform the workplace supervisor of their progress with the NVQ training.

81. Learners with additional needs state that they receive individual tutorial support with their basic skills training. However, individual learning plans do not contain details of the planned support for these learners. Learners' records contain examples of worksheets they have completed, and learners report increased confidence with literacy and numeracy. There are no arrangements to provide specialist support for learners with dyslexia. The vocational tutor/assessors support learners and guide them as much as they can. They can obtain advice from other tutor/assessors within the company who are specialists in working with learners who have additional needs.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	16	4
New Deal 18-24	64	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	213	3
Programme Centres	120	3

82. Pelcombe Training provides foundation programmes at 18 of its training centres for 413 learners. Of these, 397 are Jobcentre Plus clients and are unemployed.

83. There are 213 clients on New Deal 25+ programmes and work-based learning for adults. Clients receive an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs from Jobcentre Plus before joining programmes. Pelcombe carries out an induction. Of those in learning, 117 are in Gateway Services programmes at seven centres. These programmes last between six and 16 weeks, and form the first part of New Deal 25+. There are 96 adult clients following BET at five centres. BET clients join programmes for a 26-week period which is sometimes extended. BET programmes include a jobsearch element for half a day week.

84. Pelcombe provides programme centres for 120 clients at nine sites. Clients attend for between two and 13 weeks, and carry out jobsearch activities. Most of these clients have been unemployed for more than six months before being referred. They receive an induction from Pelcombe.

85. Sixty-four clients are on New Deal 18-24 programmes at 11 training centres. There are 17 clients following two-week intensive Gateway to Work programmes. A further 45 are following Gateway Services programmes lasting between six and 16 weeks. Pelcombe carries out initial assessment and induction when clients join these programmes. There are also two New Deal 18-24 clients on a BET programme.

86. There are 16 learners at three training centres on programmes of work-based learning for young people, funded by local LSCs. Ten are following Life Skills programmes. Connexions refers the learners to Pelcombe, where they receive an initial assessment and induction. None of the learners is employed. Learners join programmes for a 19-week period which is sometimes extended. Six learners are following preparatory training programmes which have a similar structure to Life Skills. In 1999-2000 and 2000-01, Pelcombe also provided NVQ training as part of its work-based learning for young people.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Life Skills																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	18		40		94		65									
Retained*	1		21	52	67	71	42	65								
Successfully completed	0		1	2	40	43	34	52								
Still in learning	15		1	2	0	0	0	100								

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults											
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults											
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	345		819		214						
Retained*	57	17	422	52	169	79					
Planned learning completed	19	6	263	32	149	70					
Gained job	16	5	131	16	34	16					
Still in training	201	58	12	1	0	0					

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

Programme Centres											
Programme Centres											
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	388		1353		1220		845				
Planned learning completed	264	68	1200	89	1084	89	838	99			
Gained job	150	39	513	38	529	43	395	47			
Still in training	120	31	0	0	0	0	0	0			

New Deal 18-24										
New Deal 18-24										
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	293		416		315		23			
Retained*	166	57	264	63	233	74	17	74		
Planned learning completed	155	53	259	62	233	74	17	74		
Gained job	65	22	159	38	100	32	9	39		
Still in training	63	22	1	0	0	0	0	0		

\*retained clients are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their programme, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed, or who have gained employment during their time on the programme

## STRENGTHS

- good achievement rates on New Deal 18-24
- good pastoral support for learners
- good programme centre provision at Chelmsford
- good training resources
- extensive celebration of achievement

## WEAKNESSES

- low rate of entry into employment for BET clients
- inadequate focus on some individual learning needs
- inadequate progress reviews for some learners
- poor Life Skills training

87. There is good achievement on New Deal 18-24 Gateway programmes. Many clients start these programmes reluctantly and with poor motivation. In the three years from 1999-2000 to 2001-02, of 754 clients starting programmes, over two thirds achieved all the targets in their individual learning plan. Fifty-three per cent of those who completed the programmes during this period gained employment, rising to over 60 per cent in 2001-02. The target set by Jobcentre Plus is 40 per cent. Provision at centres in Ipswich and Cambridge is particularly good. Programmes are well planned and staff provide effective training, support and encouragement to clients.

88. Staff at Pelcombe provide good pastoral support for learners. Many learners face significant personal difficulties when taking learning programmes and attempting to enter employment. They appreciate the understanding and sympathetic approach that tutors have in helping them deal with these difficulties. Tutors quickly establish a strong

rapport with learners, many of whom are following programmes lasting only a few weeks. Many of the tutors have a strong personal commitment to offering such pastoral support, and readily spend time with individual learners.

89. The programme centre provision at Chelmsford is good. During the current contractual year over half the clients have gained employment. Clients are enthusiastic about the content of the training and the effective support all staff at the centre give them. Whole class teaching is relevant to clients' needs, actively involves the clients and is well structured. Training resources at the centre are good. Good-quality learning materials focus closely on clients' needs. Training staff are well-qualified and experienced. Individual learning plans, progress reviews and clients' records are comprehensive and thorough.

90. There are good resources used in training at all centres. Teaching rooms are well-furnished and sufficiently spacious for learners to study comfortably. They are all equipped with flip charts, and many have overhead projectors. Many training rooms contain plenty of personal computers for learners to use, often with Internet access. Training rooms frequently have video players and monitors. Pelcombe has a wide range of well-written training materials for use in jobsearch. In addition, many centres have a good range of published materials which learners and tutors use. Most centres have copies of the national core curricula for literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) for tutors to refer to.

91. Learners' achievement is extensively celebrated at Pelcombe. Training centres use simple but effective means to ensure that learners are encouraged to take a pride in what they have done. On some programmes learners receive certificates produced by their training centre when they have reached a particular goal. Achievements by individuals and groups of learners are well publicised within centres in internally circulated newsletters. Learners are often highly motivated by these, since they may have experienced little recognition of success in education or training before. Training centres make good use of wall displays. In one centre, learners undertook a project on drug awareness. The results of their project are displayed prominently in the training room. The display demonstrates the good quality of the work they produced, and contains useful information relevant to the lives of many who study there. Some centres make effective use of small rewards, such as book tokens, to celebrate the success of learners in reaching targets.

92. During 2000-01 and 2001-02, fewer than 15 per cent of BET clients obtained employment. The Jobcentre Plus target for this provision is 25 per cent. The Luton and Bedford centres together provide learning for two thirds of Pelcombe's BET clients. Most of these receive ESOL training as part of their programme. There is insufficient emphasis at these centres on helping clients develop the language they require specifically to enter employment. Only two of the 55 clients at these centres are carrying out work experience. At the Colchester centre, there is inadequate support and supervision for the three clients following the BET programme.



93. The focus on learners' individual learning needs is inadequate. At the Romford centre, a group of 15 learners attends a common programme of literacy and numeracy classes, although some only need help in one of these areas. In some classes at other centres, sessions are planned with insufficient variety of approach to cater for different learning styles. Learners spend prolonged periods listening to teachers with little if any checking of their understanding. Some clients on BET provision at Colchester do not have an individual learning plan.

94. Many learners on foundation programmes at Pelcombe's centres have significant literacy, numeracy or language support needs. These often present serious barriers to their attempts to search for, or gain, employment. Many tutors realise their learners have such needs, and attempt to provide some support. However, few of these staff have had sufficient training to enable them to meet these needs effectively. The training materials tutors use are seldom adapted appropriately for learners with literacy needs.

95. Progress reviews for some learners are inadequate. On some programmes, target setting in progress reviews is poor. Reviews for clients on Gateway programmes are regular, but the targets agreed are too general for clients and tutors to know what clients should achieve and by when. At the Huntingdon centre, progress reviews rarely take place.

96. Pelcombe's Life Skills training is poor. Very few learners achieve all the targets on their individual learning plan. In the three years from 1999-2000 to 2001-02, 65 learners started programmes, but only 10 completed their planned learning. Completion rates have declined sharply, from 60 per cent in 1999-2000 to 5 per cent in 2000-01. Most learners on the programmes have a very limited understanding of what they are aiming to achieve. Few learners have work placements or any work tasters. Jobsearch is ineffective. Some learners have completed over half their programmes without applying for jobs or having any interview practice. Although learners enter and leave the programmes at different times, schemes of work are not adequately designed to cater for this. At both centres where Life Skills programmes are run, some learners have had significant periods where they have had to work with little tutorial supervision because of Pelcombe's staffing problems.

#### Good Practice

*At the Luton centre, learners who have obtained job interviews have a wardrobe of clothes available to them to use if required. They are also provided with a free haircut if they need it.*